IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Applicant(s): Wisniewski et al.
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Examiner: Walsh, John B.
Title: Communication Tagging

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Customer No.: 29,683

Commissioner For Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA   22313-1450

Appeal Brief

Sir:

This is an appeal brief in regard to the rejection of claims
in the above-identified patent application.   A Notice of
Appeal was filed October 28, 2009.   Please charge deposit
account 50-1924 the fee under 37 C.F.R. §41.20(b)(2) and for
any additional fee for proceeding with this appeal.   Please
note that an appeal brief fee of $510.00 was paid on 7/21/2008
and an additional appeal brief fee of $30.00 was paid on
12/5/2008.   Thus a total of $540.00 has already been paid as
an appeal brief fee.

I. Real Party In Interest

The real party in interest is International Business Machines
Corporation.

1

II. Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no directly related appeals or interferences regarding this application.

III. Status Of Claims

Claims 1-36 are pending in this application. Claims 1-36 have been rejected by the Examiner. The rejection of Claims 1-36 is appealed.

IV. Status Of Amendments

Since the final rejection of 07/30.2009 no amendments have been filed.

V. Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

This invention allows for the addition of an optional tag to electronic communications that facilitates collaboration among individuals, teams, managers, and computer systems. For example, in electronic mail (email) communications, Lotus Notes currently allows one to tag electronic mail as a calendar invitation. With applicants' invention, an additional automatic database agent is also described to process the tagged email. The agent, via the aforementioned tags, creates entries in the database and takes actions as required by the entries. These actions can include sending an evaluation email to an individual or collaborator upon expected completion of a task and then incorporating that

evaluation back into the database. Other actions can include collating completed tasks, initiating an evaluation email, generating reports, allowing negotiating among the collaborators of the task deliverables such as time to task completion, allowing merging of project data if one or more tasks are merged into a single task, allowing division of project data if a task is split into one or more tasks, and the ability to monitor the interactions of the collaborators and proactively request task status. In addition to communications among humans, this invention can allow tagged communications to be sent to computer systems to obtain information such as computer usage at a remote site, manufacturing yield, customer purchasing patterns, and any data pertinent to a given project stored remotely on a computer system.

Independent claim 1 claims a communication system comprising a storage device (78) comprising a database (82) configured to store communication tag information of a task tag (52, Fig. 4 and paragraphs 0027-0028 and 0032); and a database agent (80) configured to determine if a communication has the task tag (see Fig. 6 and paragraph 0032). The database agent (80) is configured to transfer predetermined communication tag information of the task tag (52) of the communication to the database, and wherein the database agent is configured to automatically send a communication (92) based upon information stored in the predetermined communication tag information (see paragraph 0033).

Independent claim 13 claims a method for automatically tracking progress of a task on a computer network consisting

of one or more users on a plurality of computer systems (see Fig. 5), the method comprising tagging (20, see paragraph 0030) a communication to be delivered between the computer systems over the network to form a tagged communication; and acting on the tagged communication automatically by a database agent of an apparatus (see Figs. 2 and 7-9, and paragraph 0058).

Independent claim 33 claims a system (see Fig. 5) for tracking tasks comprising a communication system configured to attach a task tag (see Fig. 3, number 52, and Fig. 4) to a communication; and a tracking system separate from a communication sending computer (19) and a communication receiving computer (16, 17) which is configured to automatically enter predetermined information of the task tag of the communication into a database in a storage device (see Fig. 7 and paragraphs 0034-0035).

Independent claim 34 claims a method of tracking tasks comprising sending (22) a communication; attaching (20) a task tag to the communication; recording (24), by an automatic database agent, at least a portion of data in the task tag into a database in a storage device; and automatically sending (26) a communication by the automatic database agent (80) based, at least partially, on the data in the task tag. (See Figs. 2 and 7-9 and paragraphs 0033, 0034, 0044-0045)

Independent claim 35 claims a program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodied in a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for tracking tasks, the method comprising steps of searching (90) a first communication to determine if the first communication has a

4

task tag, the task tag comprising a task topic and a task progress (see Fig. 4, items 56, 60); and automatically sending a second communication by an automated database agent (see Fig. 6, block 80) based upon data in the task tag (see Fig. 5 and paragraphs 0011, 0034, 0045; See Fig. 7, block 92 and Fig. 8, block 100).

Independent claim 36 claims a program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodied in a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for tracking tasks, the method comprising steps of creating a communication (see Fig. 2; blocks 18, 20); and attaching a task tag (see Fig. 3, item 52, and see Fig. 4) to the communication comprising a task topic (56) and a task progress 60) (see paragraphs 0012, 0027-0028).

It is an aspect of this invention to establish a method for tagging communications. It is another aspect of this invention to track task progress at the individual, team, and project level. It is another aspect of this invention to report on task progress at the individual, team, and project level. It is another aspect of this invention to allow automatic database agents to activate task communication at the individual, team, and project level. It is another aspect of this invention to allow and track the negotiation of task properties, such as time to task completion and task name, among the participants in the task and the interaction of these tasks with other related tasks. It is another aspect of this invention to allow and track the merging of tasks as decided by participants in the task. It is another aspect of this invention to allow and track the division of tasks into

5

multiple tasks as decided by participants in the task. It is another aspect of this invention to allow the ability to monitor task deadline and proactively send communication to participants in the task.

VI. Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

A. Are Claims 1-14 and 16-36 anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) by Reed et al. (US 2002/0095454)?

B. Is Claim 15 unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Reed et al. (US 2002/0095454) in view of Wolton et al. (US 2004/0030741)?

VII. Argument

A.   35 U.S.C. §102(e) (Claims 1-14 and 16-36)(Reed et al. (US 2002/0095454))

Claim 1

As explain in paragraph [0027], in the example embodiment shown in Fig. 3 an entry window 30 for composing and sending **an email** which includes conventional items such as a Send icon 32, a Save icon 34, an Attach File icon 36, an Options icon 38, a To icon 40, a To entry field 42, a CC icon 44, a CC entry field 46, a Subject field 48, and a message field 50. The window 30 also comprises **a Task Tag icon 52**. When the user selects the Task Tag icon 52, another entry window 54, shown in Fig. 4, pops up. The task tag entry window 54 generally comprises a deliverable or project field 55, a task

6

topic field 56, a time to task field 58, a task progress field 60, a reminder interval field 62, a collaborator type field 64, a task priority field 66, an OK icon 68, a Clear icon 70, an Edit Defaults icon 72, and drop-down field selection icons 74. The user can enter tag information into the fields 55-66 or select tag information to be entered into the fields by use of the drop-down menus when icons 74 are used. See also paragraphs 0030-0031 for more information regarding this example embodiment.

Independent claim 1 claims a communication system comprising a storage device comprising a database, and a database agent. The database agent is configured to determine if a communication has **a task tag**. The database agent is configured to **transfer predetermined communication tag information** of the task tag of the communication to the database. The database agent is configured to automatically send a communication **based upon information stored in the predetermined communication tag information**.

In regard to the examiner's belief that Reed et al. "anticipates" claim 1, the Board is directed to MPEP 2131. Anticipation requires that **each and every element** of the claimed invention be disclosed in a single prior art reference (emphasis added). In re Paulsen, 30 F.3d 1475, 31 USPQ2d 1671, 1673 (Fed. Cir. 1994). Anticipation requires **identity** of the claimed invention (emphasis added). Tyler Refrigeration v. Kysor Indus. Corp., 777 F.2d 687, 227 USPQ 845 (Fed. Cir. 1985). For anticipation, there must be **no difference** between the claimed invention and the reference disclosure (emphasis added). Scripps Clinic & Res. Found. V.

7

<u>Genentech, Inc.</u>, 927 F.2d 1565, 18 USPQ2d 1001 (Fed. Cir. 1991). The corollary of the rule is that absence from the reference of any claimed element negates anticipation. <u>Kloster Speedsteel AB v. Crucible, Inc.</u>, 793 F.2d 1565, 230 USPQ 81 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

The examiner has stated that "11" in Reed et al. is equivalent to applicants' claimed database and that somehow paragraph 0031 and 0090 disclose applicants' claimed database agent. This appears to be in error. Although "11" is a database, there is no disclosure or suggestion in paragraphs 0031 and 0090 of Reed et al. of a database agent configured to determine if a communication has a task tag. The examiner has indicated that paragraph 0032 in Reed et al. is configured to determine if a communication has a task tag. This is not correct. Paragraph 0032 states:

> "According to another aspect of the invention, a consumer program is used to receive and process the transferred information. The consumer program receives information from the provider or polls a location identified by the transferred information to determine when information has been updated by the provider. The consumer program then retrieves the information from the proper source and compares it to the existing information to determine what has been updated. The consumer program maintains a database of information from different providers. When updated information is received, the consumer program executes instructions associated with the information to store the updated information, notify a user of updated information, and generate responses for the consumer. The

consumer program also can transfer the information to second consumer computer. The second consumer computer can obtain updated information from the provider computer or have it forwarded by the first consumer computer."

There is no disclosure or suggestion in this paragraph of a database configured to determine if a communication has **a task tag**. In addition, paragraph 0032 is in regard to the consumer program 2 having the consumer database 21 (see Fig. 1); not the database 11 of the provider computer.

The examiner points to paragraph 0033 of Reed et al. stating that it discloses when certain types of messages or objects are received by the program they can operate automatically to act accordingly. However, nowhere in any one of the three paragraph (0031-0033) is there a disclosure or suggestion of a task tag or use of a task tag.

There is no disclosure or suggestion in paragraphs 0031-0033 and 0090 of Reed et al. of a database agent configured to transfer predetermined communication tag information of the task tag of the communication to the database 11. There is no disclosure or suggestion in paragraphs 0031-0033 and 0090 of Reed et al. of a database agent configured to automatically send a communication based upon information stored in the predetermined communication tag information. Reed et al. simply does not "anticipate" the features recited in claim 1.

Nowhere in Reed et al. is there a disclosure of:

- A database agent configured to determine if a communication has **a task tag;**

9

- A database agent configured to transfer predetermined communication tag information of **the task tag** of the communication to the database; or

- A database agent is configured to automatically send a communication based upon information **stored in the predetermined communication tag information.**

The examiner's statement that these features are disclosed in Reed et al. is pure fiction and totally unsupported by the disclosure in Reed et al.

In the present case, the examiner has not proven that there is **identity** between the cited reference and the features of claim 1. In the present case, the examiner has not proven that **each and every element** of the claimed invention is disclosed in the cited reference. In the present case, the examiner has not proven that there are **no differences** between the claimed invention and the reference disclosure.

The examiner has not established a prima facie case of anticipation. The examiner has not produced sufficient proof that Reed et al. "anticipates" the features recited in claim 1. Nor are the features suggested in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 2

Claim 2 claims that the communication comprises an email and that the database agent configured to determine if the email has a task tag. The examiner points to paragraph 0090 in Reed et al. as anticipating the features of claim 2. However, although paragraph 0090 in Reed et al. mentions email, there

is no disclosure of a database agent configured to determine **if the email has a task tag**. The examiner has not established that Reed et al. discloses a database agent configured to determine if the email has a task tag. The examiner has not presented a prima facie case of anticipation. Nowhere in paragraph 0090 of Reed et al. is there a disclosure or suggestion of a database agent configured to determine if the email has a task tag. Therefore, claim 2 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 3

Claim 3 claims that the **task tag** comprises a task topic and a task reminder, wherein the database agent is configured to transfer the task reminder to the database. The examiner points to paragraph 0180 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. Although paragraph 0180 mentions a header portion (of an object markup file) with a header tag, there is no disclosure of a **task tag comprises a task topic and a task reminder,** wherein the database agent is configured to transfer the task reminder to the database. The examiner has not presented a prima facie case of anticipation. Nowhere in paragraph 0180 of Reed et al. is there a disclosure or suggestion of the features recited in claim 3. A header portion (of an object markup file) with a header tag is not a disclosure of a task tag comprising a task topic and a task reminder, wherein the database agent is configured to transfer the task reminder to the database. The features of claim 3 are not disclosed or suggested in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 3 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 4

11

Claim 4 claims that the database agent is configured to
transfer the **task topic** to the database with the **task
reminder**. The examiner points to paragraphs 0031-0045 and
0090-0094 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. These
paragraphs art too length to repeat herein. However, after
reading these paragraphs, applicants' attorney could not find
any disclosure in these paragraphs of a database agent
configured to transfer a **task topic to the database 11 or the
database 21 with a task reminder** as recited in claim 4.
Merely indicating that a program can operate automatically
when certain messages or objects are received is not a
disclosure or suggestion of a transfer of a task topic to a
database with a task reminder. The disclosure in Reed et al.
is just too broad; not specific enough to be considered an
anticipation of applicants' claimed features. The examiner
has not established a prima facie case of anticipation. Reed
et al. simply does not disclose or suggest the features
recited in claim 4. Therefore, claim 4 is patentable and
should be allowed.

Claim 5

Clam 5 claims that the database agent is configured to store
the task reminder in the database corresponding to a task
topic already stored in the database. The examiner points to
paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. as
disclosing these features. There is absolutely no disclosure
in these paragraphs of a database agent configured to store a
task reminder in a database **corresponding to a task topic
already stored in the database** as recited in claim 5. These
paragraphs of Reed et al. are void of such a disclosure. The

12

examiner has not established a prima facie case of anticipation. Reed et al. simply does not disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 5. Therefore, claim 5 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 6

Claim 6 claims that the database agent is configured to generate a report based upon communication tag information stored in the database. The examiner points to paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. There is absolutely no disclosure in these paragraphs of a database agent configured to generate **a report based upon communication tag information** stored in the database as recited in claim 6. These paragraphs of Reed et al. are void of any disclosure of the programs 12 or 22 being configured to generate **a report based upon communication tag information** stored in the database. Merely indicating that a program can operate automatically when certain messages or objects are received is not a disclosure or suggestion of the programs 12 or 22 being configured to generate a report based upon communication tag information stored in their respective databases.

Paragraphs 0408-0409 of Reed et al. (not explicitly cited by the examiner regarding claim 6) mention reports and automatic reporting. However, there is absolutely no disclosure in these paragraphs of a database agent configured to generate **a report based upon communication tag information** as recited in claim 6. These paragraphs of Reed et al. are void of any disclosure of the programs 12 or 22 being configured to generate **a report based upon communication tag information.**

The examiner has not established a prima facie case of anticipation. Reed et al. simply does not disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 6. Therefore, claim 6 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 7

Claim 7 is dependent upon claim 6 and claims that the database agent is configured to automatically generate the report based upon a predetermined event. The examiner points to paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. There is absolutely no disclosure in these paragraphs of a database agent (programs 12 or 22) configured to automatically generate the report based upon a predetermined event as recited in claim 7. A simple reading of paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. proves applicants' point. The examiner has not established a prima facie case of anticipation. Reed et al. simply does not disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 7. Therefore, claim 7 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 8

Claim 8 is dependent upon claim 6 and claims that the database agent is configured to **generate the report based upon a request submitted by a user**. The examiner points to paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. There is absolutely no disclosure in these paragraphs of a database agent configured to generate the report based upon a request submitted by a user as recited in claim 8. A simple reading of paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. proves applicants' point. Merely

indicating that a program can operate automatically when certain messages or objects are received is not a disclosure or suggestion of the programs 12 or 22 being configured to automatically generate the report based upon a request submitted by a user. The examiner has not established a prima facie case of anticipation. Reed et al. simply does not disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 8. Therefore, claim 8 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 9

Claim 9 claims that the communication tag information comprises an importance factor, wherein the database agent is configured to **prioritize** at least a portion of the **communication tag information** based upon the importance of factors of the communication tag information stored in the database. The examiner points to paragraphs 0294, 0318-preference and 0322 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. Paragraph 0318 certainly mentions "preference values", however these three paragraphs do not disclose or suggest communication tag information comprising an importance factor, wherein the database agent is configured to prioritize at least a portion of the communication tag information based upon the importance of factors of the communication tag information stored in the database. Where in Reed et al. is there disclosed a database agent configured to prioritize at least a portion of communication tag information based upon the importance of factors of the communication tag information stored in the database? There is no such disclosure. The examiner has been clearly subject to hindsight reasoning. The

features of claim 9 are not disclosed or suggested in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 9 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 10

Claim 10 claims that the database agent is configured to automatically obtain information relating to the communication tag information from a remote computer. The examiner points to paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. There is absolutely no disclosure in these paragraphs of a database agent configured to **automatically obtain information relating to a communication tag information from a remote computer** as recited in claim 10. A simple reading of paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. proves applicants' point. Merely indicating that a program can operate automatically when certain messages or objects are received is not a disclosure or suggestion of the programs 12 or 22 being configured to automatically obtain information relating to a communication tag information from a remote computer. The examiner has not established a prima facie case of anticipation. Reed simply does not disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 10. Therefore, claim 10 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 11

Claim 11 claims that the database agent is configured to collate at least a portion of the communication tag information stored in the database. The examiner points to paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. There is absolutely no disclosure in these paragraphs of a database agent configured to **collate**

at least a portion of a **communication tag information** stored in a database as recited in claim 11. A simple reading of paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. proves applicants' point. Merely indicating that a program can operate automatically when certain messages or objects are received is not a disclosure or suggestion of the programs 12 or 22 being configured to **collate** at least a portion of a **communication tag information** stored in a database. The examiner has not established a prima facie case of anticipation. Reed et al. simply does not disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 11. Therefore, claim 11 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 12

Claim 12 claims that the communication tag information comprises a deliverable/project tag information, and wherein the database agent is configured to transfer **deliverable/project tag information of the task tag** of the communication to the database. The examiner points to paragraph 0439 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. Paragraph 0439 merely discloses:

> "Other advantages of communications object system naming services are enumerated in the communications object exchange control section above. Besides individual names and commercial trademark names, communications object system naming services can be applied to many specialized or vertical market naming needs such as industrial part names; research topic names; corporate department, group, or project names; software programming object names; and so on. The specific naming service used is not a limiting feature of the invention."

There is no disclosure or suggestion in Reed et al. of communication tag information comprising a deliverable/project tag information, wherein the database agent is configured to transfer deliverable/project tag information of the task tag of the communication to the database. Paragraph's 0439 disclosure is in regard to **naming** and specific **naming services**. This has nothing to do with applicants' claimed database agent is configured to transfer deliverable/project tag information of the task tag of the communication to the database. The features of claim 12 are simply not disclosed or suggested in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 12 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 13

Independent claim 13 claims a method for automatically tracking progress of a task on a computer network consisting of one or more users on a plurality of computer systems, the method comprising:

> tagging a communication to be delivered between the computer systems over the network to form a tagged communication; and

> acting on the tagged communication automatically by a database agent of an apparatus.

The examiner indicated that paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. anticipated this claimed method. This is incorrect. All of the details described in paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 are too numerous to summarize below. However, after reading these paragraphs it is clearly seen that there is not disclosure or suggestion of a method for

automatically tracking progress of a task on a computer network consisting of one or more users on a plurality of computer systems, the method comprising:

> **tagging a communication** to be delivered between the computer systems over the network to form a tagged communication; and

> **acting on the tagged communication automatically** by a database agent.

Tracking progress of a **"task"** in this manner is simply not disclosed or suggested in paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094. The features of claim 13 are certainly not "anticipated" by the disclosure in paragraphs 0031 and 0090 of Reed et al. Therefore, claim 13 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 14

Claim 14 claims that the tagged communication includes an electronic mail communication. Although paragraph 0090 of Reed et al. discloses email. There is no disclosure or suggestion of that email being part of a **tagged communication** wherein the method (as recited in claims 13 and 14) **tags an email** to be delivered between the computer systems over the network to form a "tagged communication". <u>There is no disclosure or suggestion in Reed et al. of the email mentioned in paragraph 0090 being tagged.</u> Thus, Reed et al. does not "anticipate" the features recited in claim 14. Claim 14 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 16

Claim 16 claims that the tagged communication includes a telephone message converted to electronic communication with the use of voice-recognition software. The examiner points to paragraph 0536 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. However, paragraph 0536 merely discloses:

"Schedule objects 110 can be employed to solve a wide variety of common scheduling problems. One example is the universal problem of "telephone tag". In this example, schedule objects 110 are employed at a distribution server 32. Any type of distribution server 32 can be used, but in a preferred embodiment, a combination of the programs 12, 22 and a distribution partner server 1302 is used. This allows message objects 110 to be transmitted and received directly from the distribution partner server 1302 using a direct transmission protocol such as HTTP. This is faster than a store-and-forward protocol like Internet SMTP e-mail, however the latter can also be used if the scheduling process is not time-sensitive. To enable telephone call coordination, the provider first adds one or more scheduling elements 143, methods 141, and rules 140 to any communications object 110 in which the provider wishes to offer scheduling control. The provider can also add schedule control using a scheduling component object 110. The provider also maintains his/her current schedule by adding and maintaining schedule objects 110 to the provider database 11. Thus the provider's current set of schedule objects 110 will indicate the present readiness of the provider to receive a phone call; the current phone number at which the provider should be reached; the options for notifying the provider about the call request; and the options for scheduling a phone call with the provider at some future time if the provider is not available immediately."

A scheduler object and "telephone-tag" problems between telephone users as described in paragraph 0536 is **not** a disclosure or suggestion of **a tagged communication including a telephone message converted to electronic communication with the use of voice-recognition software.** The features of claim

16 are not disclosed or suggested in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 16 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 17

Claim 17 claims that the step of acting involves **storing the task in the database**. The examiner points to paragraph 0090 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. See paragraph 0090 of Reed et al. repeated above with respect to claim 4. Paragraph 0090 of Reed et al. mentions storing information in a database. However, there is no disclosure or suggestion of the features of claim 17 in combination with the features of claim 13 in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 17 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 18

Claim 18 claims that the step of acting involves **updating information about the task in the database**. The examiner points to paragraph 0090 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. See paragraph 0090 of Reed et al. repeated above with respect to claim 4. Paragraph 0090 of Reed et al. mentions changed information and storing information in a database. However, there is no disclosure or suggestion of the features of claim 18 in combination with the features of claim 13 in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 18 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 19

Claim 19 claims that the step of acting involves **generating a report**. The examiner points to paragraph 0408-0409 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. Certainly, these paragraphs

mention reports and automatic reporting. However, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Reed et al. of the features of claim 19 in combination with the features of claim 13. More specifically, there is no disclosure of a method for **automatically tracking progress of <u>a task</u>** on a computer network consisting of one or more users on a plurality of computer systems, the method comprising **tagging a communication** to be delivered between the computer systems over the network to form a tagged communication; and **acting on the tagged communication automatically** by a database agent **comprising generating a report.** Therefore, claim 19 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 20

Claim 20 claims that the users are selected from a group consisting of individuals, collaborators, team leaders and managers. The examiner has stated that users are inherently individuals. However, Reed et al. does not disclose or suggest **a group consisting of** individuals, collaborators, team leaders and managers as recited in claim 20.

Claim 21

Claim 21 claims that the users include other computer programs, wherein the other computer programs produce data including computer usage at a present or remote site, manufacturing yield, or customer purchasing patterns. The examiner has stated that it is inherent for computer programs to produce data in view of computer usage. This may be true. However, this does not mean that the features of claim 21 are anticipated by Reed et al. There is no disclosure or

inherency of a method as recited in claim 21 for **automatically tracking progress of a task** on a computer network consisting of one or more users on a plurality of computer systems, the method comprising **tagging a communication** to be delivered between the computer systems over the network to form a tagged communication; and **acting on the tagged communication automatically** by a database agent, wherein the users include other computer programs, **and** the other computer programs produce data including computer usage at a present or remote site, manufacturing yield, or customer purchasing patterns. The features of claim 21 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art.

Claim 22

Claim 22 claims that the users are selected from a group **consisting of a combination** of individuals, collaborators, team leaders, managers, and other computer programs. The examiner has stated that users are inherently individuals. However, Reed et al. does not disclose or suggest users being selected from a group **consisting of a combination** of individuals, collaborators, team leaders, managers, and other computer programs. The features of claim 22 are not disclosed or inherent in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 22 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 23

Claim 23 claims that **an importance of the task** on the tag is set and negotiated by the users. The examiner points to paragraphs 0294, 0318 and 0322 of Reed et al. as disclosing

these features. However, these three paragraphs merely
disclose:

"Acknowledgment messages can still be used even when the distribution method uses the pull technique. This is accomplished identically to the above except for the following. First, the acknowledgment message object instance (810, FIG. 17) returned to the provider program 12 includes such additional data about the consumer as is necessary to create a recipient record 120. Second, if the recipient record 120 instance does not exist in the provider database 11, the SendAck method needs to create it, and also create the association 121 between the recipient 120, the communications object 110, and one or more methods 141, including an update method. This specialized use of an acknowledgment message object 110 is referred to as a registration message. Registration messages are important for three reasons. First, registration messages can be used to track communications object distribution and usage even when the provider does not have the capability to distribute updates using the push technique. An example is when an expensive, high-powered web server is used for high-volume distribution of a communications object, but an inexpensive personal computer and e-mail account is used for tracking communications object acknowledgment messages. Second, registration messages can be used on an intermittent basis by only including the SendAck receipt method in selected communications object updates. This allows distribution statistics and other data to be gathered periodically rather than with every update. Third, if the acknowledgment message object 110 includes the e-mail address of the consumer, the resulting list of recipients 120 created by registration messages can allow the provider to convert the communications object update method from pull to push. Conversion between update methods is discussed further below."

"When the communications object containing the notification elements is transferred to the consumer program 22, the preference values for each notification element are editable by the consumer. As shown in FIG. 4, these preference values are stored in an instance 221 of the element preferences class 147. This instance inherits the logical attribute NotifyFlag from the notification element instance 201. The value for this

field is represented by a checkbox next to the name and description of the notification element 202 when the consumer is editing any form containing the notification element. This could be the selected page form (612, FIG. 14) or the edit object form (612, FIG. 14). The selected page form would present the notification element in the context of the other elements on the page. The edit object form allows all preference elements for the object, including all notification elements, to be edited at once. FIG. 23 illustrates how notification elements on a typical edit object form might appear."

"FIG. 4 illustrates two typical notification methods assigned to an element preference instance 221. A SendEMail method 224 causes each message element 211 associated with the notification element 202 to be sent as an e-mail message to an address or addresses specified by the consumer. Preferably, such an e-mail message would use as the start of its header a signifying string such as "Special Alert:", followed by the headline text value from the associated message element 211. The body of the message would then contain the body value from the associated message element 211. It could also contain the headline link value, body link value, and other status or navigational information, such as the name of the originating communications object, the name of the provider, or other actions taken. An AddToNotifyReport method 225 causes the headline of each associated message element 211 to appear in the consumer's notification report (630, FIG. 14). To set this trigger, the AddtoNotifyReport method adds a logical NotifyReportFlag attribute 223 to the element preference instance 221 and sets its value to TRUE. To display the notification report (630, FIG. 14), the consumer program 22 performs a query of the consumer database 21 for all message elements 211 associated with all element preference instances 221 where the NotifyReportFlag 223 value is TRUE. The actual content displayed in the report is determined by attributes of the consumer's global preferences (103, FIG. 3). The consumer may wish to see headlines only. In this case each headline can be displayed as a hyperlink. When selected, the hyperlink will display the message body and body links as a separate page. Alternatively, the consumer may wish to see all headlines, messages, and links in the notification report. Headlines may also be linked to other elements or methods, such as those used for

data exchange. Headlines may also function as a hyperlink directly to another URL anywhere on the Internet. Another option is for the consumer to see communications objects for which there are new notifications displayed differently than other communications objects for which there are no new notifications. Notification reports may also be sorted according to the settings of the sort form (634, FIG. 14), or by using various toolbar buttons for common sorting or filtering options. For example, notification data could be sorted by communications object name, communications object nickname, date, folder, or notification priority. Different standard or custom notification reports can also be stored and presented as menu options or toolbar buttons. A example of a notification report sorted by date showing headlines only for communications objects which had new notifications is shown in FIG. 24. Each notification report entry can include a button for deleting the entry from the notification report immediately, or a checkbox for batch deletion, or both. In either case, when the notification report form is submitted, this button or checkbox causes the NotifyReportFlag attribute 223 of the corresponding preference element instance 221 to be set to FALSE. The format of a notification report is not a limiting feature of the invention."

Certainly, there is a disclosure of preference values for each notification element being editable by the consumer. However, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Reed et al. of an importance of the **task** on the **tag** being set and negotiated by the users as claimed in claim 23. The "notification" described in Reed et al. is not the same as applicants' claimed "task"; nor is it a "tag" on a communication. Therefore, claim 23 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 24

Claim 24 claims that **a time duration of the task on the tag is set and negotiated by the users.** The examiner points to

paragraph 0398 and "time intervals" as a disclosure or these features. Paragraph 0398 merely discloses:

> By functioning as active databases, the provider program 12 and consumer program 22 can control the archiving of the data they store. This is a very useful capability for many communications functions. First, many providers and consumers frequently wish to refer to past communications data. When stored in electronic format, this data is also computer searchable, which is another key advantage. Additionally, archiving data can be useful for error correction, as explained below. As shown in FIG. 3, data archive control is achieved primarily through the use of archive attributes, archive rules 140 and archive methods 141. The application of data archiving rules 140 in both the provider program 12 and consumer program 22 is explained above and in steps 735-737 of FIG. 15. These examples show how an archiving attribute and rule are used to control the number of previous versions of a communications object that will be archived. Archiving rules also allow control of archiving using time intervals, data size parameters, by the presence or absence of element preferences 147, and other parameters.

A disclosure of archiving using time intervals is not a disclosure of a time duration of a **task on the tag** being set and negotiated by users. The features of claim 24 are not disclosed or suggested in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 24 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 25

Claim 25 claims that the step of acting involves **merging communications from various tasks into one communication for a single task.** The examiner points to paragraph 0520 as a disclosure or these features. Paragraph 0520 merely discloses:

27

"Finally, in a multiuser database 100, multiple user objects 110 can also have a provider relationship with a single communications object 110. This is referred to as multiuser editing. Multiuser editing of communications objects 110 is advantageous in a communications object system for the same reasons multiuser database sharing is advantageous in many business applications. Just as two or more individuals can need the ability to read or edit same data, two or more individuals can need to communicate about the same subject or topic through the same "channel". In many multiuser database environments, including network file systems, database access and editing rights are controlled using access control lists. This same principle can be applied to a communications object system through the use of access control elements 143, access control methods 141, and access control rules 143. Collectively these are referred to as access control components. Access control elements 143 are special elements 143 included in a communications object 110 in order to define the editing rights which the original communications object provider wishes to grant to other providers. Access control methods 141 and access control rules 140 act in conjunction with access control elements 143 to enforce these rights. Access control is an extension of data exchange control, discussed in the data exchange control section above. Access control components are a unique advantage of a communications object system because they can be contained within the communications object 110 which they govern. Thus they can be distributed and enforced throughout a communications object system. Access control rights can also be governed using user group objects 110. In this capacity user group objects 110 function similarly to access control groups used in many computer network environments to govern file and resource access."

This is merely a disclosure regarding access control by multiple users. There is no disclosure of merging communications from various tasks into one communication for a single task as recited in clam 25. The features of claim 25 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 25 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 26

Claim 26 claims that the step of acting involves **separating communications from one task into several communications for separate tasks.** The examiner points to paragraph 0519 and "multiuser database" of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. However, paragraph 0519 merely discloses:

"In a multiuser database 100, a user object 110 can have a consumer relationship with a communications object 110 to which another user object 110 has a provider relationship. This has several very important benefits. To begin with, no instance of the recipient class 120 nor the acknowledgement association 121 is needed. Both can be replaced entirely by the relationship associations 111. Secondly, no communications object distribution routine is necessary. When the user object 110 representing a provider (called the "provider user object") and the user object 110 representing a consumer (called the "consumer user object") are both present in a multiuser database 100, a communications object 110 can be "pushed" to a consumer simply by the provider creating a new association between the communications object 110 and the consumer user object 110. A communications object 110 can be "pulled" by a consumer just by the consumer creating a new association between the communications object 110 and the consumer user object 110. In both of these cases, creation of the new association triggers a "new object reception rule" 140 in the database 100. This rule takes the place of the new object reception routine in a separate consumer program 22 and executes steps 703-708 of FIG. 15. Updates to a communications object 110 by the provider can also be "transmitted" to all associated consumers via the operation of the standard update association rule 140 operating throughout the database 100. This operation of this rule takes the place of the update object reception routine (FIG. 10B) by executing steps 721-731 of FIG. 15. This rule 140 only applies to consumer relationship associations, i.e. where the ProviderFlag value is FALSE."

The description regarding a multiuser database is not a disclosure of separating communications from one task into several communications for separate tasks as claimed in claim 26. The features of claim 26 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 26 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 27

Claim 27 claims that monitoring a task deadline and being proactive in sending communication to humans and computers participating in the task. The examiner points to paragraphs 0398 and 0318 of Reed et al. as disclosing these features. However, paragraphs 0398 and 0318 merely disclose:

"By functioning as active databases, the provider program 12 and consumer program 22 can control the archiving of the data they store. This is a very useful capability for many communications functions. First, many providers and consumers frequently wish to refer to past communications data. When stored in electronic format, this data is also computer searchable, which is another key advantage. Additionally, archiving data can be useful for error correction, as explained below. As shown in FIG. 3, data archive control is achieved primarily through the use of archive attributes, archive rules 140 and archive methods 141. The application of data archiving rules 140 in both the provider program 12 and consumer program 22 is explained above and in steps 735-737 of FIG. 15. These examples show how an archiving attribute and rule are used to control the number of previous versions of a communications object that will be archived. Archiving rules also allow control of archiving using time intervals, data size parameters, by the presence or absence of element preferences 147, and other parameters."

"When the communications object containing the notification elements is transferred to the consumer program 22, the preference values for each notification element are

editable by the consumer. As shown in FIG. 4, these preference values are stored in an instance 221 of the element preferences class 147. This instance inherits the logical attribute NotifyFlag from the notification element instance 201. The value for this field is represented by a checkbox next to the name and description of the notification element 202 when the consumer is editing any form containing the notification element. This could be the selected page form (612, FIG. 14) or the edit object form (612, FIG. 14). The selected page form would present the notification element in the context of the other elements on the page. The edit object form allows all preference elements for the object, including all notification elements, to be edited at once. FIG. 23 illustrates how notification elements on a typical edit object form might appear."

There is no disclosure or suggestion in these paragraphs of **monitoring a task deadline** and being proactive in sending communication to humans and computers participating in the task as claimed in claim 27. The features of claim 27 are not disclosed or suggested in Reed et al. Therefore, claim 27 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 28

Claim 28 claims that **tag properties on the communication include time to task completion, task progress, task topic, reminder interval, and collaborator type.** This feature in combination with the features of claim 13 are not disclosed or suggested in Reed et al. The examiner points to paragraph 0398 of Reed et al. (see the paragraph recited above with respect to claim 27) as disclosing these features. Archiving rules of controlling archiving are not disclosed as being tag properties on a communication. The features of claim 28 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 28 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 29

Claim 29 claims that choices for tagging the communication include a tag property of a task progress which selected from a group **consisting of** previous, new, in-progress, complete, other. The examiner points to paragraph 0090 of Reed et al. (and specifically the language "other" and the examiner states that it can which can be anything) as an anticipatory disclosure of the features of claim 29. Paragraph 0090, last four words states "and other notification methods." The methods this language is referring to is notification methods similar to on a display, or printed, or email or voice-mail. This "other" language in Reed et al. is clearly not an anticipatory disclosure of choices for tagging the communication include a tag property of a task progress which selected from a group consisting of previous, new, in-progress, complete, other as claimed in claim 29. The features of claim 29 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 29 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 30

Claim 30 claims that choices for tagging the communication include a tag property of a collaborator type which can be selected from a group consisting of individual, collaborator, team leader, manager, senior manager, vice-president, CEO, CIO, contractor. The examiner has not identified where in Reed et al. he believes these features are disclosed.

Claim 31

Claim 31 claims that **permissions may be associated with the task restricting viewing of the task** only to users with appropriate access credentials. The examiner points to paragraph 0357 and the language "ID" in Reed et al. as disclosing these features. However, paragraph 0357 merely discloses:

> "A second application is personalization of web or hypermedia content, i.e., presenting a customized or filtered view of a web site to reduce the need for scanning or browsing by the consumer. One existing approach is to have consumers establish an ID, choose a password, and enter personal preference data into input forms provided by the web server. This data is then stored at the web server or another remote location and used to present customized views of the web site. An example is MyYahoo from Yahoo Inc. To see new content, the consumer must then manually visit the web site, enter the necessary ID and password, and browse their customized content, which is only available online. Whenever the consumer's preference data changes, the consumer must manually change it on all such web sites."

A disclosure of personalization of web or hypermedia content by having consumers establish an ID is not a disclosure of a method where permissions may be **associated with a task** restricting viewing of the task only to users with appropriate access credentials as claimed in claim 30. The features of claim 30 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 30 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 32

Claim 32 claims that the step of tagging a communication comprises adding deliverable/project information and task information to the communication. The examiner points to paragraphs 0090-0093 of Reed et al. as disclosing these

features. However, these paragraphs of Reed et al. do not disclose tagging a communication comprises adding deliverable/project information and task information to the communication as claimed in claim 32. The features of claim 30 are not "anticipated" by Reed et al. Therefore, claim 32 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 33

Independent claim 33 claims a system for tracking tasks comprising:

> a communication system configured to attach a task tag to a communication; and
>
> a tracking system separate from a communication sending computer and a communication receiving computer which is configured to automatically enter predetermined information of the task tag of the communication into a database in a storage device.

Reed et al. clearly does not disclose a communication system configured to attach a **task tag to a communication;** and a **tracking system separate from a communication sending computer** and a communication receiving computer which is configured to **automatically enter predetermined information of the task tag** of the communication into a database. Thus, Reed et al. does not "anticipate" the features of claim 33.

In regard to the examiner's belief that Reed et al. "anticipates" claim 33, the Board is directed to MPEP 2131. Anticipation requires that **each and every element** of the claimed invention be disclosed in a single prior art reference

(emphasis added).   In re Paulsen, 30 F.3d 1475, 31 USPQ2d 1671, 1673 (Fed. Cir. 1994). Anticipation requires **identity** of the claimed invention (emphasis added).   Tyler Refrigeration v. Kysor Indus. Corp., 777 F.2d 687, 227 USPQ 845 (Fed. Cir. 1985).   For anticipation, there must be **no difference** between the claimed invention and the reference disclosure (emphasis added).   Scripps Clinic & Res. Found. V. Genentech, Inc., 927 F.2d 1565, 18 USPQ2d 1001 (Fed. Cir. 1991).   The corollary of the rule is that absence from the reference of any claimed element negates anticipation. Kloster Speedsteel AB v. Crucible, Inc., 793 F.2d 1565, 230 USPQ 81 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Reed et al. does not disclose **each and every element** of the claimed invention.   Thus, claim 33 is not "anticipated" by Reed et al. Claim 33 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 34

Independent claim 34 claims a method of tracking tasks comprising sending a communication; attaching a task tag to the communication; recording, by an automatic database agent, at least a portion of data in the task tag into a database in a storage device; and automatically sending a communication by the automatic database agent based, at least partially, on the data in the task tag. Paragraphs 0031-0045 and 0090-0094 of Reed et al. cited by the examiner do not disclose attaching a task tag to the communication; recording, by an automatic database agent, at least a portion of data in the task tag into a database; and automatically sending a communication by the automatic database agent based, at least partially, on the data in the task tag. Paragraph 0093 discloses that the

consumer database 21 can include instruction, and that the provider can include special forms to be processed by the consumer program 22 to automatically transfer data from the consumer database 21 back to the provider, and paragraph 0180 mentions a header tag. However, there is no disclosure or suggestion attaching a **task tag** to the communication; recording, by an automatic database agent, at least a portion of data in the task tag into a database; and automatically sending a communication by the automatic database agent **based, at least partially, on the data in the task tag**. Reed et al. does not "anticipate" the features recited in claim 34. Therefore, claim 34 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 35

Independent claim 35 claims a program storage device with a program of instructions to perform a method comprising searching a first communication to determine if the first communication has a task tag, the task tag comprising a task topic and a task progress; and automatically sending a second communication by an automated database agent based upon data in the task tag. The paragraphs of Reed et al cited by the examiner do not disclose a communication having a task tag comprising a task topic and a task progress; much less searching a first communication to determine if the first communication has a task tag. Paragraphs 0031, 0090, 0177-0183 and 0093 of Reed et al cited by the examiner do not disclose **automatically sending a second communication** by an automated database agent based upon data in a **task tag**. No "task tag" is disclosed. Thus, no operation of automatically sending a second communication by an automated database agent

based upon data in a task tag could be disclosed. The
features recited in claim 35 are not disclosed or suggested in
the cited reference. Therefore, claim 35 is patentable and
should be allowed.

Claim 36

Independent claim 36 claims a program storage device with a
program of instructions to perform a method for **tracking tasks**
comprising creating a communication; and **attaching a task tag
to the communication** comprising **a task topic and a task
progress**. Reed et al. does not disclose a task tag; much less
a task tag comprising a task topic and a task progress. Thus,
Reed et al. clearly does not disclose attaching a task tag to
a communication comprising a task topic and a task progress as
recited in claim 36. Reed et al. clearly does not
"anticipate" the features recited in claim 36. Therefore,
claim 36 is patentable and should be allowed.

B.   35   U.S.C.   §103(a)   (Claim   15)(Reed   et   al.   (US
        2002/0095454) in view of Wolton et al. (US 2004/0030741))

Claim 15 claims that the tagged communication includes an
instant electronic message. Even if, for the sake of
argument, it was obvious to combine Wolton et al. with Reed et
al., this still would not suggest a communication system
comprising a database configured to store communication tag
information of a task tag; and a database agent configured to
determine if a communication has the task tag, wherein the
database agent is configured to transfer predetermined
communication tag information of the task tag of the
communication to the database, and wherein the database agent

is configured to automatically send a communication based upon information stored in the predetermined communication tag information, and where the tagged communication includes an instant electronic message as claimed in claim 15. Therefore, claim 15 is patentable and should be allowed.

VIII. Claims Appendix

Attached.

IX. Evidence Appendix

None.

X. Related Proceedings Appendix

None.

Conclusion

In view of the arguments presented above, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner's rejections of Claims 1-36 be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,

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VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. A communication system comprising:

a storage device comprising a database configured to store communication tag information of a task tag; and

a database agent configured to determine if a communication has the task tag, wherein the database agent is configured to transfer predetermined communication tag information of the task tag of the communication to the database, and wherein the database agent is configured to automatically send a communication based upon information stored in the predetermined communication tag information.

2. A communication system as in claim 1 wherein the communication comprises an email and the database agent configured to determine if the email has a task tag.

3. A communication system as in claim 1 wherein the task tag comprises a task topic and a task reminder, and wherein the database agent is configured to transfer the task reminder to the database.

4. A communication system as in claim 3 wherein the database agent is configured to transfer the task topic to the database with the task reminder.

5. A communication system as in claim 3 wherein the database agent is configured to store the task reminder in the database corresponding to a task topic already stored in the database.

6. A communication system as in claim 1 wherein the database agent is configured to generate a report based upon communication tag information stored in the database.

7. A communication system as in claim 6 wherein the database agent is configured to automatically generate the report based upon a predetermined event.

8. A communication system as in claim 6 wherein the database agent is configured to generate the report based upon a request submitted by a user.

9. A communication system as in claim 1 wherein the communication tag information comprises an importance factor, and wherein the database agent is configured to prioritize at least a portion of the communication tag information based upon the importance of factors of the communication tag information stored in the database.

10. A communication system as in claim 1 wherein the database agent is configured to automatically obtain information relating to the communication tag information from a remote computer.

11. A communication system as in claim 1 wherein the database agent is configured to collate at least a portion of the communication tag information stored in the database.

12. A communication system as in claim 1 wherein the communication tag information comprises a deliverable/project tag information, and wherein the database agent is configured to transfer deliverable/project tag information of the task tag of the communication to the database.

13. A method for automatically tracking progress of a task on a computer network consisting of one or more users on a plurality of computer systems, the method comprising:

tagging a communication to be delivered between the computer systems over the network to form a tagged communication; and

acting on the tagged communication automatically by a database agent of an apparatus.

14. A method as in claim 13 where the tagged communication includes an electronic mail communication.

15. A method as in claim 13 where the tagged communication includes an instant electronic message.

16. A method as in claim 13 where the tagged communication includes a telephone message converted to electronic communication with the use of voice-recognition software.

17. A method as in claim 13 wherein the step of acting involves storing the task in the database.

18. A method as in claim 13 where the step of acting involves updating information about the task in the database.

19. A method as in claim 13 where the step of acting involves generating a report.

20. A method as in claim 13 where the users are selected from a group consisting of individuals, collaborators, team leaders and managers.

21. A method as in claim 13 wherein the users include other computer programs, and wherein the other computer programs produce data including computer usage at a present or remote site, manufacturing yield, or customer purchasing patterns.

22. A method as in claim 13 wherein the users are selected from a group consisting of a combination of individuals, collaborators, team leaders, managers, and other computer programs.

23. A method as in claim 13 wherein an importance of the task on the tag is set and negotiated by the users.

24. A method as in claim 13 wherein a time duration of the task on the tag is set and negotiated by the users.

25. A method as in claim 13 wherein the step of acting involves merging communications from various tasks into one communication for a single task.

26. A method as in claim 13 wherein the step of acting involves separating communications from one task into several communications for separate tasks.

27. A method as in claim 13 wherein the step of acting involves monitoring a task deadline and being proactive in sending communication to humans and computers participating in the task.

28. A method as in claim 13 wherein tag properties on the communication include time to task completion, task progress, task topic, reminder interval, and collaborator type.

29. A method as in claim 13 wherein choices for tagging the communication include a tag property of a task progress which selected from a group consisting of previous, new, in-progress, complete, other.

30. A method as in claim 13 wherein choices for tagging the communication include a tag property of a collaborator type which can be selected from a group consisting of individual, collaborator, team leader, manager, senior manager, vice-president, CEO, CIO, contractor.

31. A method as in claim 13 wherein permissions may be associated with the task restricting viewing of the task only to users with appropriate access credentials.

32. A method as in claim 13 wherein the step of tagging a communication comprises adding deliverable/project information and task information to the communication.

33. A system for tracking tasks comprising:

a communication system configured to attach a task tag to a communication; and

a tracking system separate from a communication sending computer and a communication receiving computer which is configured to automatically enter predetermined information of the task tag of the communication into a database in a storage device.

34. A method of tracking tasks comprising:

sending a communication;

attaching a task tag to the communication;

recording, by an automatic database agent, at least a portion of data in the task tag into a database in a storage device; and

automatically sending a communication by the automatic database agent based, at least partially, on the data in the task tag.

35. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodied in a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for tracking tasks, the method comprising steps of:

searching a first communication to determine if the first communication has a task tag, the task tag comprising a task topic and a task progress; and

automatically sending a second communication by an automated database agent based upon data in the task tag.

36. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodied in a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for tracking tasks, the method comprising steps of:

creating a communication; and

attaching a task tag to the communication comprising a task topic and a task progress.

IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None

X. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None